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LETTER DATED 12 NOVEMBER 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have been instructed by my Government to lodge a strong protest at the alarming situation in health services in the upper Morava river basin in Kosovo and Metohija, the autonomous province of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia.

Serbian doctors have been evicted from the medical centre at Gnjilane and operate in makeshift premises. Out of over 100 doctors only 4 remain in Gnjilane, with 8 nurses and 1 technician. In addition to catering to the Serbs remaining at Gnjilane, they tour the adjacent Serbian villages with 15,000 Serbs without any - even the most basic - equipment.

At least 15 doctors of diverse specialties, 5 dentists and 1 pharmacist are needed to provide the basic medical services in the Gnjilane area. A special problem is the vaccination of children, as only 274 children have been vaccinated so far, with great delay and with the assistance of international organizations.

By their eviction from the medical centre at Gnjilane, Serbian doctors and nurses have been deprived of the basic working conditions, while the Serbian population has been denied the possibility to protect their health and the health of their children. In this way the principles of humanity have been ruthlessly trampled upon.

In drawing your attention to the dramatic health situation in this part of Kosovo and Metohija, I have the honour to transmit herewith the expectation of my Government that the Security Council will react appropriately and take steps to ensure most urgently to the remaining Serbs in the Gnjilane area the right to medical protection and provide the Serbian doctors and nurses conditions for normal work.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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